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ABSTRACT

This document contains informational materials about the breakdown in merger talks between the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA). Included in the packet are (a) the AFT statement on the breakup of unity talks; (b) transcripts of two news conferences by David Selden, president of the AFT, on the termination of the merger talks; (c) the NEA release on termination of merger talks; (d) an AFT news release bailing the withdrawal of fire fighters from the Coalition of American Public Employees; and (e) a news release of the AFT about the Jewish Anti-Defamation League suing NEA on "retrogressive" quota policies. (HMD)

TERMINATION OF AFT-NEA MERGER TALKS

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NEWS
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AFL/CIO
1012 14th STREET, N. W. / WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005 / 202-737-6141 AFT DAVID SELDEN, President

AFT STATEMENT ON BREAK UP OF UNITY TALKS

WASHINGTON DC FEBRUARY 28, 1974 (AFT NEWS SERVICE) -- THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS DEPLORES THE DECISION OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION TO BREAK OFF TEACHER UNITY DISCUSSIONS. MOST OF THE NATION'S MORE THAN 3 MILLION TEACHERS WANT UNITY. THEY WILL BE BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE IRRESPONSIBLE ACTION OF THE NEA. THE BREAK OFF OCCURRED BECAUSE OF THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE NEA TO ATTEMPT TO WORK OUT THE PROBLEMS WHICH SEPARATE THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS. THE AFT REPEATEDLY DECLARED ITS WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER COMPROMISE PROPOSALS IN ORDER TO MAKE MERGER OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS POSSIBLE.

ON THE VITAL QUESTION OF AFL-CIO AFFILIATION THE AFT CONCEDED THE RIGHT OF NEA MEMBERS TO REJECT AFL-CIO AFFILIATION INDIVIDUALLY, AND THE AFT SUGGESTED A GRADUAL PHASE-IN OF STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS.

OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS THE NEA'S INSISTENCE ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC QUOTAS ON OFFICIAL BODIES WERE NOT DISCUSSED BUT THE AFT NEGOTIATORS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD MAKE COMPROMISE PROPOSALS WHEN THESE ITEMS WERE REACHED. THE REJECTION OF THE AFT COMPROMISE ATTEMPTS BY THE NEA WAS ABRUPT AND FINAL. A PROPOSAL BY THE AFT THAT A MEDIATOR BE BROUGHT INTO THE TALKS WAS ALSO REJECTED.

TEACHER UNITY IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE NATION'S TEACHERS. IT IS UP TO THEM TO TELL THE NEA LEADERS THAT TEACHERS WANT AN END TO ORGANIZATIONAL BICKERING AND MANEUVERING, AND THAT THEY EXPECT TEACHER LEADERS TO WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE THINGS AMERICAN SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND CHILDREN NEED SO URGENTLY. THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS DECLARES ITS DEDICATION TO THAT END AND WE STAND READY AND WILLING TO RESUME UNITY TALKS WHENEVER NEA LEADERS HAVE A CHANGE OF MIND AND HEART. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO INTENSIFY ORGANIZING EFFORTS WITH ALL THE RESOURCES AT OUR COMMAND.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RALPH LLOYD, Public Relations Director 202-737-6141

TERMINATION OF AFT-NEA MERGER TALKS

NEWS CONFERENCE
Statler-Hilton Hotel, Washington, D. C.
February 28, 1974
David Selden, President
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

LLOYD: As you know, last night merger talks between the NEA and AFT broke off and President Dave Selden will discuss that.

SELDEN: Because there are a number of tape recorders here, I'm going to read the statement. Then I'll take questions.

"The American Federation of Teachers deplores the decision of the negotiating committee of the National Education Association to break off teacher unity discussions. Most of the nation's more than 3 million teachers want unity. They will be bitterly disappointed by the irresponsible action of the NEA. The breakoff occurred because of the unwillingness of the NEA to attempt to work out the problems which separate the two organizations. The AFT repeatedly declared its willingness to consider compromise proposals in order to make merger of the two organizations possible.

"On the vital question of AFL-CIO affiliation, the AFT conceded the right of NEA members to reject AFL-CIO affiliation individually, and the AFT suggested a gradual phase-in of state and local organizations.

"Other issues, such as the NEA's insistence on racial and ethnic quotas on official bodies, were not discussed, but the AFT negotiators made it clear that they would make compromise proposals when these items were reached. The rejection of the AFT compromise attempts by the NEA was abrupt and final. A proposal by the AFT that a mediator be brought into the talks was also rejected.

"Teacher unity is now in the hands of the nation's teachers. It is up to them to tell the NEA leaders that teachers want an end to organizational bickering and maneuvering, and that they expect teacher leaders to work together to achieve the things American schools, teachers and children need so urgently. The American Federation of Teachers declares its dedication to that end and we stand ready and willing to resume unity talks whenever NEA leaders have a change of mind and heart. In the meantime, we have no choice but to intensify organizing efforts with all the resources at our command."

Q.: Mr. Selden, on the question of AFL-CIO affiliation, AFT conceded the right of NEA members to reject AFL-CIO affiliation individually, you said. You never took a vote on that, so this is just an understanding of what the AFT would do, isn't that right?

A.: No. Our Executive Council has been in session yesterday and today. They authorized our negotiating committee to make this proposal, which we did. It was rejected by the NEA.

Q.: What does that mean -- reject AFL-CIO affiliation individually?

A.: At the time of the merger, any member of an organization not then affiliated with the AFL-CIO could send a postcard or telegram or letter to the headquarters of the new organization and say, in effect, "count me out," in which case, no per capita on that person would be paid to the AFL-CIO.

Q.: Was this process reviewed with the AFL-CIO?

A.: No. However, we had discussed similar ideas with officers of the AFL-CIO over a number of years.

Q.: Dave, does this mean now that there's no prohibition against pushing state and local mergers?

A.: That's right. Open season!--on any form of competition, whether through merger or straight-ahead organizing.

Q.: Are there any areas where you think merger at state and local level don't appear to be too far apart?

A.: Well, there is something doing in Florida.

Q.: Hasn't the NEA been winning recent organization fights with the AFT?

A.: No. We've had only one switchover this school year from AFT to NEA. On the other hand, there have been many that have gone the other way. We just won a very important election in St. Louis,

Q.: What happened in St. Louis?

A.: There was a joint teacher strike a year ago. It went on for four weeks. One of the outcomes of the strike was that there would be a collective bargaining election within a year. That election was held--we got about 2,200 votes and the NEA got about 1,600. We are now the exclusive bargaining agent for St. Louis teachers. We have also won a number of lesser elections--Anderson, Indiana; Fayette County, Indiana; Carter County, Tennessee. We've got more organizing opportunities than we can possibly respond to.

Q.: Have you decided whether or not to seek re-election?

A.: No. I don't want to get into any of the internal matters of the AFT at this time.

Q.: At the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting, Mr. Shanker attacked Mr. Wurf and his union for actions that would keep the NEA out of the AFL-CIO. Do you believe that this could possibly have had anything to do with the break of the merger talks?

A.: Indirectly, yes. I think that AFSCME through its so-called coalition provides an AFL-CIO cover for the NEA that they are glad enough to accept without having to pay the per capita.

Q.: Would you explain that please?

A.: Well, there is a coalition group called the Coalition of American Public Employees--a very grandiloquent name for an organization of three unions--but it consists of State-County, NEA, and a group in the Treasury Department, I think. The Fire Fighters pulled out. This gives a kind of AFL-CIO cover for the NEA, which they really don't deserve.

Q.: There's serious consideration in the AFL-CIO of setting up a public employees department.

A.: We've participated in those talks and we very much favor it. It tends to accentuate the importance of public employees in the AFL-CIO--there are many advantages.

Q.: Where does it stand now? Does the AFL-CIO Executive Council have the authority to put it in operation?

A.: Yes. They didn't do it this time, but it was discussed and the consensus was that they would go ahead. So it's been held over to the next meeting.

Q.: Dave, would you explain this racial and ethnic quotas on official bodies?

A.: Yes. The NEA has a provision in its constitution which requires that 20 percent of its official bodies, committees, etc. be composed of persons from ethnic and racial minorities. It's interesting to note that their negotiating committee did not meet that requirement. But anyway, they wanted it in the constitution of the merged organization. We say that this is really an illegal quota, and while we favor affirmative action, we are opposed to percentage quotas for ethnic and racial minorities. We think that when the Supreme Court gets around to deciding this issue--which is an issue in one case already before it, and in another case which has just been initiated--that the Court will declare these quotas unconstitutional.

Q.: Do you have any idea how many of your state and local affiliates have minority presidents or officers?

A.: A great many--I don't know. There's one standing back there--Bill Simons--AFT Local 6.

Q.: Why do you oppose racial and ethnic quotas?

A.: For the classic reasons--when you set up quotas for some people, you automatically squeeze out others. We have been in this fight a long time. It goes back to the days when medical schools and law schools in the nation excluded Jews who didn't fit within their quota. We have opposed quotas of this sort steadily over the years.

Q.: If this merger had gone through, what would have been the membership of this combination?

A.: Initially it would have been about 1.6 million, but I have no doubt that once the two organizations were merged, and the merged organization began to do things for teachers, it would go over 2 million very rapidly and it would be only a matter of time before everybody was in it.

Q.: Did you ever decide on a name for the merged organization?

A.: No. How do you like the United Teachers of America?

Q.: With 1.6 million, would that make you the largest union in trade unionism?

A.: No. The potential would be there, but we would still be smaller than the Teamsters.

Q.: Would it make it the largest union within the AFL-CIO?

A.: Yes.

Q.: What now will be the consequences of this failure to achieve unity, aside from the organizational fight?

A.: I think we will benefit organizationally in a peculiar way. It is clear that the AFT stands for unity. We are willing to resume the talks this afternoon if they want to, and we are flexible. We think the principle of unity is of overriding importance to the teachers of America. The way to bring about unity, in view of what has happened, is for more teachers to join the AFT and maybe it'll wake somebody up over at the NEA.

Q.: Do you think the NEA broke off talks for any reasons other than those you've stated, or that they've told you?

A.: I don't want to get into the motives of the NEA. You'll have to ask them what their motives were.

Q.: In the original NEA statement, Dr. Wise said that the talks were "severely hampered" by the internal dispute of the AFT . . . Would you agree that the AFT dispute was a major factor in cutting off the merger talks?

A.: Not at all. As a matter of fact the negotiating committee presented to the NEA a proposal that I have favored for a long time. So I can't say that the internal dispute prevented anything from getting to the negotiating table that I favored. As a matter of fact, if we were so disrupted, I should think that they would want to drive in--easier to negotiate with an opponent who hasn't got all his thing together.

Q.: Did you or did you not offer to the NEA the option to merge and then affiliate within three years?

A.: No. I never have made that proposal. That's not my proposal.

Q.: You said that the AFT would benefit organizationally in a peculiar way, but you didn't elaborate.

A.: I think teachers are going to resent the breakup of the talks and they will realize that the way to get unity is to join the AFT.

Q.: When I talked with the striking teachers in Baltimore, I was told that the rank and file are so disgusted and disillusioned with both the NEA and the AFT at the local level, that they're not paying their dues to either organization. Would you have a comment on that?

A.: I think that in that case, they ought not to seek labor support for their strike. Actually, most teachers welcome and want labor support in that strike. And I think labor support for the teachers in Baltimore is going to be the deciding factor.

Q.: Did you people get to the point at all of fitting officers and people into the slots of executive boards.

A.: No. Our compromise proposal was rejected and that ended the talks.

Thank you.

(END)

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TERMINATION OF AFT-NEA MERGER TALKS

EXCERPTS FROM NEWS CONFERENCE
Plaza Inn, Kansas City, Missouri
March 1, 1974

David Selden, President
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Q.: . . . . . I'd like to ask you about the breakup of the merger talks. The NEA has said that the AFT was inflexible on three areas -- AFL-CIO affiliation, minority representation and secret ballot.

SELDEN: Well, in the first place, the NEA offered no compromise solutions to these problems. We offered what we thought was a very generous compromise on AFL-CIO affiliation. They rejected that and we never got to the two other items, but if we had gotten to those items, we had compromise proposals to make on them too. So I think their statement is completely false.

Q.: What was the AFL-CIO compromise proposal?

SELDEN: That, following national merger, there would be a gradual phase-in of state and local organizations over some time, that time of phase-in would be negotiable, and that any individual NEA member who didn't want to go along with AFL-CIO affiliation could opt out.

Q.: At any time?

SELDEN: No. At the time of merger. You couldn't have that as a continuing condition.

Q.: Anybody that joined after the merger then would have to become a member of the AFL-CIO?

SELDEN: Yes. After all, membership would presumably be voluntary and they would know what they were joining. Those who had joined before and had joined an unaffiliated organization could continue to be unaffiliated if they wanted. Now, we wouldn't advise that, but if that would make them feel better, why we would go along with that. . . .

Q.: Mr. Selden, can we ask about the situation regarding possible merger with the NEA? How is that proceeding and where does it stand now?

SELDEN: This week the NEA broke off merger talks with the AFT. We deplore that breakdown in talks. It took us many years to even get the NEA negotiators in the same room with us. And now, just when we're beginning to get down to specifics, they throw in their hand and pull out. I hope that some way can be found to resume the merger discussions, because I think all teachers want a single organization -- they want unity -- they're not interested in all this organizational bickering and maneuvering. They want and expect the leaders of both organizations to find a way to work things out so there's one organization representing teachers. That's the central thing. I think it's too bad that the effort is broken down just when it had some promise of fruition.

Q.: Were they unilaterally broken off by the NEA?

SELDEN: Yes, they were. It was a unilateral breakoff. And a rejection of a compromise proposal on AFL-CIO affiliation made by us with no counter-offer coming from the NEA.

Q.: Did you resent that she announced the breakoff of the talks without first announcing it to you?

SELDEN: Well, I suppose that's within the rules of the ball game. If you're not in negotiations anymore, both sides are free to make any statements they want. However, I would have hoped that she would have stuck a little more closely to the truth.

Q.: Did you discuss any other items besides the AFL-CIO?

SELDEN: No. But the statement from Dr. Wise of the NEA would lead you to think that we had discussed a whole range of topics and that it was the AFT that was recalcitrant on those topics. This is far from the truth. We discussed only one topic this week, although in previous meetings we had had exploratory discussions. But these were just fencing matches before. Now when we get down on the mat and really begin to get to real hard bargaining, we made a proposal on one aspect of the negotiations and this was rejected without a counteroffer. We had other compromise offers ready to present on the question of racial and ethnic minority representation on official bodies, on the question of secret ballot election of officers, and on other matters which would have to be resolved. But we never got to them because suddenly their negotiating team caucused and after a rather brief time -- say ten minutes -- they came back in and said that well, it's obvious we couldn't get together, and so they were breaking off negotiations.

Q.: What day was that?

SELDEN: That was Wednesday night.

Q.: Is there any possibility at all that you'll get back to the table with, say, different NEA leadership?

SELDEN: We're ready to go within an hour.

Q.: Do you think your feud with Mr. Shanker affected at all AFT's position in these talks?

SELDEN: Well, I don't really think I ought to comment on that. I may have some comment on it later. I'll just make a general comment, that the NEA may have felt that they had some organizational advantage to gain by breaking off negotiations until the internal situation in the AFT had resolved itself. There may have been that, but I don't know what their motives were. The fact is that we put a negotiable item on the table and the NEA did not respond, and regardless of what they may have thought about anything that was going on in the AFT -- you know, we don't like a lot of things that are going on on their side either -- they had a morale responsibility to respond to this good faith attempt to reach agreement on our part.

Q.: Did you get any type of response at all?

SELDEN: None. . . . Well, "No." That was their response.

Q.: I can't think of any other topics unless you'd have any comments on President Nixon's federal education budget?

SELDEN: Yes. It's bad!

LLOYD: O.K. Thank you very much

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MEMO

From . . . RALPH LLOYD RL

NEA RELEASE ON TERMINATION OF MERGER TALKS 2/28/74

Merger discussions between negotiating teams of the AFT and the NEA convened for the first time since December 13 at 8 p.m., February 27, long after the offices of both organizations and of Press Relations Wire, which does TWX transmissions for NEA, had closed. Yet the attached release was received by PR Wire at 9:18 a.m. the next day and by the New York State United Teachers, an NEA affiliate, at 9:23 a.m. Clearly the lengthy statement had been written and prepared for transmission before the discussions of Thursday evening the 27th even convened. Hence, the large number of inaccuracies, misstatements and falsehoods in the release.

1. The AFT did not "remain rigid" on the question of AFL-CIO affiliation, but in fact presented a compromise proposal at this meeting which opened the way to negotiation of the issue. The NEA side did not discuss it at all with the AFT.

2. Referenda of memberships of organizations which have merged (CUNY, New Orleans, New York State, Dade County, etc.) have shown an overwhelming desire on the part of America's teachers for teacher unity. The emphasis on AFL-CIO affiliation in this release raises the same smoke screen for individual vested interests within the NEA as has been raised in previous NEA anti-merger campaigns.

3. The "obvious simplemindedness" quotation from AFT First Vice President Albert Shanker's New York Times column of December 9 is blatantly distorted. It did not refer to "commitment by NEA members to assure proper representation by minorities," but to a mathematically rigid formula, proposed by the NEA's Samuel Ethridge in a speech to the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. Under the formula 211,000 additional minority group educators would be hired in order to bring minority group representation up to the NEA's quota level. The NEA release ignores the rest of the column as well. Entitled "The Quota Principle: Dangerous Arithmetic and Twisted Logic," it ends with this observation: "We must fight to guarantee that no one is excluded from a position as a result of racial discrimination--but, if we value a free society, we cannot demand a society in which each group has its fixed quota in each occupation."

4. The statement of Helen Wise that the AFT was "unwilling to accept the NEA's position that there be written guarantees" on minority representation in a merger agreement is pure conjecture and, in fact, false. The NEA terminated merger discussions before this issue was even discussed at the table. The AFT had proposals to make on all matters of concern to the NEA, but the union team was never given a chance to present them.

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5. The issue of the secret ballot election of officers likewise did not come up at the bargaining table, in any negotiating sense. No proposals were offered by either side and no discussion was held on resolving the differences between NEA and AFT election procedures. For Mrs. Wise to pontificate on the advantages of the secret ballot without having had the benefit of hearing the AFT's position presumes much.

6. Any discussion of AFT "internal problems" is entirely irrelevant to the merger talks. The lengthy discourse in the NEA statement may be intended to becloud the fact that the AFT team presented a united front at the table and to imply that only the NEA had itself together. The fact is that the February 27 meeting was the first time the parties had gone beyond getting acquainted and began to talk about substantive issues. The NEA was not able to get beyond the cordiality and get down to bargaining, so it picked up its marbles and went home.

7. Mrs. Wise goes beyond talking about the AFT's "rigidity" on "critical issues" to predict that there is "little promise for the future of merger" until the AFT changes to "positions acceptable to the majority of America's teachers." As a one-term president, however, she is not in a position to predict what may happen in the future; nor, inasmuch as the staff-controlled NEA has never polled its membership on teacher unity, can she speak for the "majority of America's teachers." She is right, however, that "organizational rivalry. . . will undoubtedly continue." As AFT President David Selden said in a news conference on Friday, February 28, it is "open season--on any form of competition, whether through merger or straight-ahead organizing."

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NEA RELEASE ON TERMINATION OF MERGER TALKS, 2/28/74

AFT WSH

THS PRW WASH FOR MR. RALPH LLOYD PLEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEA TERMINATES MERGER DISCUSSIONS
WITH AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

WASHINGTON, D.C., FEB. 28 -- MERGER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS \AFL-CIO\ HAVE BEEN TERMINATED BY THE NEA, HELEN D. WISE, NEA PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED TODAY. "THE POSITIONS ARE CLEAR, NEA WANTS TEACHER UNITY. AFT WANTS AFL-CIO MEMBERSHIP. THE TWO ARE NOT COMPATIBLE," SAID DR. WISE.

ACCORDING TO WISE, "THE TALKS HAVE ENDED BECAUSE THE AFT HAS NO FLEXIBILITY ON THE ISSUES OF AFL-CIO AFFILIATION, MINORITY GUARANTEES AND THE SECRET BALLOT."

THE NEA PRESIDENT DETAILED THE REASONS FOR THE BREAK-OFF OF TALKS\

1. "MERGER IS DESIRABLE TO NEA ONLY IF IT INCREASES TEACHER UNITY. IT IS DESIRABLE TO AFT ONLY IF IT PRODUCES MEMBERSHIP IN AFL-CIO. THROUGHOUT THE TALKS THE AFT REMAINED RIGID THAT THE MERGED ORGANIZATION AND ALL OF ITS AFFILIATES MUST BE AFFILIATED WITH THE AFL-CIO. SINCE A MAJORITY OF AMERICAN TEACHERS DO NOT WISH TO BE IN ORGANIZATIONS AFFILIATED WITH THE AFL-CIO, NO TEACHER UNITY COULD BE ACHIEVED UNDER AFT CONDITIONS. IT IS CLEAR, THEREFORE, THAT AFT LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES PLACE RECRUITMENT FOR AFL-CIO ABOVE TEACHER UNITY.
2. "IDEALLY, THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS SHOULD RESULT IN MINORITY REPRESENTATION ON ALL THE ELECTED AND APPOINTIVE BODIES OF THE NEA AND ITS AFFILIATES. HISTORICALLY THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED IN ANY OF OUR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. THE NEA BELIEVES THERE SHOULD BE PROVISIONS WHICH INSURE SUCH REPRESENTATION. OUR NEW CONSTITUTION PROVIDES SUCH GUARANTEES. OUR REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY INSISTED SUCH GUARANTEES WERE NOT TO BE COMPROMISED IN THESE TALKS.

"THIS COMMITMENT BY NEA MEMBERS TO ASSURE PROPER REPRESENTATION BY MINORITIES WAS DESCRIBED PUBLICLY BY VICE PRESIDENT SHANKER AS \...OBVIOUS SIMPLEMINDEDNESS.\ THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE DECEMBER 9, 1973 WITH THE ISSUE IN THE TALKS, DESPITE AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PARTIES REGARDING PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION.

"THE AFT, WHILE PAYING LIP SERVICE TO MINORITY INVOLVEMENT, OPPOSED AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO ASSURE IT. THERE IS NO COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN THE NEA COMMITMENT AND THE AFT'S LAISSEZ-FAIRE ATTITUDE ON THIS ISSUE. THE AFT WAS UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THE NEA\S POSITION THAT THERE BE A [illegible] IN THE DOCUMENT.
3. "THE SECRET BALLOT TO ELECT OFFICERS AND CHANGE [illegible] DOCUMENTS PROTECTS THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO CONTROL THEIR ORGANIZATION. IT PREVENTS A PATRONAGE SYSTEM WHICH STIFLES THE MEMBERSHIP AND LEADS TO MANY OTHER ABUSES BY LEADERSHIP. MANY WITHIN THE AFT MEMBERSHIP AGREE WITH THE NEA POSITION ON THIS MATTER. THE AFT LEADERSHIP DOES NOT.

4. "OUT TALKS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY HAMPERED BY THE INABILITY OF THE AFT LEADERSHIP TO SOLVE THEIR INTERNAL PROBLEMS PRIVATELY. IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO TAKE SIDES IN THE SELDEN-SHANKER DISPUTE. IN FACT, I\D PREFER TO AVOID THE MATTER ALTOGETHER\ HOWEVER, THEY HAVE INVOLVED US BY NUMEROUS CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES REGARDING THE TALKS. I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN\T DEAL WITH THIS MATTER.

"THE AFT HAS OBVIOUSLY DONE LITTLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO CONSTRUCTIVE TALKS ABOUT TEACHER UNITY WITH THE FLAILING AWAY AT EACH OTHER EVER SINCE THE TALKS BEGAN.

"ONE CHARGE DIRECTLY INVOLVES US. MR. SELDEN SEEMS TO BE ACCUSED OF DEALING WITH NEA IN A COVERT MANNER. I STATE CLEARLY AN EMPHATICALLY THAT NEA HAS NEGOTIATED ONLY AT THE TABLE WITH THE FULL AFT TEAM PRESENT AND HAS IN NO WAY ENGAGED IN ANY COVERT ACTIVITY REGARDING THESE TALKS.

"OUR ONLY PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING THIS DISPUTE BEFORE TODAY WAS ONE I ISSUED LAST DECEMBER WHICH SAID THE FIGHT AMONG AFT LEADERSHIP \CERTAINLY CONFUSES THE MERGER DISCUSSIONS AND MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO PROCEED WITH OPTIMISM.\ I CONSIDERED THAT TO BE VERY RESTRAINED AT THE TIME AND EVIDENCE OF OUR GOOD FAITH EFFORT. I STILL DO."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE POSSIBILITIES OF MERGER, PRESIDENT WISE SAID\ "THE RIGIDITY OF THE AFT ON CRITICAL ISSUES PREVENTED ANY PROGRESS ON THE TALKS AND OFFERS LITTLE PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE OF MERGER BETWEEN NEA AND AFT. THERE ARE BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US. IN ORDER FOR MERGER TO TAKE PLACE, THE AFT WILL HAVE TO CHANGE TO POSITIONS ACCEPTABLE TO THE MAJORITY OF AMERICA\S TEACHERS. UNTIL THAT TIME, ORGANIZATIONAL RIVALRY WHICH HAS NOT DIMINISHED DURING THE TALKS, WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE.

"IN REJECTING AFFILIATION, THE NEA IS NOT REJECTING THE AFL-CIO. THE TEACHERS OF THIS COUNTRY DESIRE A STRONG, UNIFIED, INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY WELCOME COOOPERATIVE AND MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ORGANIZATIONS WHICH REPRESENT A CONSTUC-

TIVE FORCE IN OUR SOCIETY. WE CONSIDER THE AFL-CIO AMONG THOSE WITH WHOM WE COULD HAVE A CORDIAL AND BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP. IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE AFT IS ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH SUCH A RELATIONSHIP. THE NEA CAN HELP THE AFL-CIO, AND THEY CAN HELP US. THE IDEA IS NOT NEW. OUR MEMBERS HAVE SUPPORTED A CONCEPT OF COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS FOR MANY YEARS. OUR DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE AFT HAS NOT REDUCED OUR RESPECT FOR THE AFL-CIO.

"RECOGNIZING THAT A STRUCTURAL MERGER WAS NOT POSSIBLE, THE NEA MADE ONE FURTHER EFFORT TO ACHIEVE HARMONY WITH THE AFT BY SUGGESTING COOPERATION IN LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER AREAS THROUGH THE COALITION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. ONCE AGAIN THIS SUGGESTION WAS REJECTED BY AFT.

"THE ADVANTAGES THE NEA NOW HAS IN MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND RESOURCES WILL INCREASE--\13
HAVE A CHOICE OF ORGANIZATION TO REPRESENT THEM. OUR EXPERIENCE IN THESE TALKS CONFIRMS OUR BELIEF THAT THE CHOICE IS A CLEAR ONE."

CORRECTION ON OVERLINE--
RESOURCES WILL INCREASE. THE TEACHERS OF AMERICA WILL CONTINUE ITO HAVE A CHOICE OF ORGANIZATION TO REPRESENT THEM.

CONTACT HELEN WISE NEA TEL 202/833-4303 OR TERRY HERNDON NEA PHONE 202/833-4303 OR PHIL KING NEA PHONE 202/833-4484.

The AFT Council meeting, held in Washington, D. C. on February 27, and 28, 1974, approved a proposal for an organizational phase-in on AFL-CIO affiliation plus an opt-out for those individuals who for reasons of conscience or for whatever feelings they may have cannot go all the way.

This is the way it was presented at the negotiating table: "Let us agree on timetables by which organizations -- national, and individual state and local -- would be affiliated to the AFL-CIO. In our mind the timetables are flexible. At the same time, any individual teacher not now in an organization affiliated with the AFL-CIO could indicate to the merged organization his or her individual desire not to be affiliated with the AFL-CIO, in which case he or she would receive such assurance, and for such a teacher per capita would not be paid."

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NEWS
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AFL-CIO
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AFT
DAVID SELDEN, President

AFT HAILS FIRE FIGHTERS WITHDRAWAL FROM CAPE

WASHINGTON DC FEBRUARY 27, 1974 (AFT NEWS SERVICE) -- THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TODAY SAID THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS FROM THE COALITION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (CAPE) WAS A "LAUDABLE" MOVE IN LIGHT OF THE FAILURE OF CAPE TO MOUNT ANY EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGN IN ITS TWO YEARS OF EXISTENCE.

CAPE WAS A COALITION ANNOUNCED BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION TWO YEARS AGO. IT NOW INCLUDES THE AFSCME, INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE EMPLOYEES AND NEA.

THE WITHDRAWAL WAS ANNOUNCED BY IAFF PRESIDENT HOWARD MCCLENNAN IN A FEBRUARY 15 LETTER TO RALPH FLYNN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CAPE. MCCLENNAN SAID, "OUR DECISION . . . WAS PROMPTED BY THE FACT THAT WE THINK THERE IS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO FORM A PUBLIC EMPLOYEES SECTION WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF THE AFL-CIO. FURTHERMORE, WE THINK SUCH AN ORGANIZATION WOULD PROVIDE AN OUTSTANDING FORUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES SECOND TO NONE. TOO, A PUBLIC EMPLOYEES SECTION WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF THE AFL-CIO WOULD MOST CERTAINLY COORDINATE, AS WELL AS ENHANCE, OUR LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS."

CAPE WAS A WIDELY TOUTED MOVE ON THE PART OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION IN 1972 TO ENLIST THE COOPERATION OF AFL-CIO UNIONS, INCLUDING THE FIRE FIGHTERS AND THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES (AFSCME), TO ENGAGE IN JOINT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS.

AFT PRESIDENT SELDEN ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"THE FORMATION OF THE COALITION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC EMPLOYEES WAS FROM THE BEGINNING A TRANSPARENT PLOY ON THE PART OF THE NEA TO GET THROUGH THE BACK DOOR SOME OF THE CRUMBS FROM THE SMORGASBORD OF BENEFITS THAT AFT MEMBERS GET FROM THEIR AFL-CIO AFFILIATION. CAPE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO MOUNT A SUCCESSFUL LEGISLATIVE EFFORT ON ANY FRONT.

"THE RECOGNITION BY THE FIRE FIGHTERS THAT A COALITION WITHIN THE AFL-CIO IS FAR BETTER THAN ONE OUTSIDE IT IS A LAUDABLE SIGN AND INDICATES THAT THE NEA MAY SOON BE BROUGHT TO REALIZE THAT TEACHERS CAN'T GET UNION BENEFITS UNLESS THEY PAY UNION DUES.

"WE APPROVE OF WHAT THE FIRE FIGHTERS DID AND URGE AFSCME TO FOLLOW SUIT."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RALPH LLOYD, Public Relations Director 202-737-6141

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ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE SUING NEA ON 'RETROGRESSIVE' QUOTA POLICIES

WASHINGTON DC February 27, 1974 (AFT News Service) -- The National Education Association will be charged with "reprehensible and retrogressive" racism in a suit to be brought by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of the B'nai B'rith.

Under attack is the NEA's new constitution and bylaws which give special preference to blacks, Chicanos, other Spanish-speaking minorities, Asian-Americans and native Americans among NEA officerships and committees.

The ADL, in a suit to be filed under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, will hold that the NEA's "constitution and bylaws deny members the right and responsibility to select the best qualified leadership and staff personnel without regard to ethnic or racial background." The NEA constitution requires that there be a 20 percent ethnic-minority representation on each committee, including the powerful Executive Committee, whose ethnic minority candidates must be nominated by ethnic-minority delegates to the Representative Assembly (convention). This would deprive the other delegates of rights which are guaranteed under Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act, according to the League.

Delegates to the 1973 NEA convention from the merged New York State United Teachers (NEA-AFT) challenged the legality of the constitutional quota system. New York candidates for NEA office, Walter Tice and Antonia Cortese, made elimination of quotas a prime plank in their platforms.

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